

Stefania Nanni, ed. *La musica dei semplici: L'altra Controriforma*. Studi del dipartimento di storia, culture, religioni 6. Rome: Viella, 2012. 464 pp. €34. ISBN: 978-88-8334-552-4.

by Noel O'Regan

This collection of twenty-two essays tells an alternative story of Counter-Reformation music: that experienced by ordinary people – the *semplici* of the title – in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is addressed on two fronts: internal missions to the unsophisticated people of Catholic Europe, and foreign missions to Latin America and China. This two-pronged approach spreads the treatment rather widely; there are essentially two books here and it might have been better to have deepened the treatment of Europe and left the foreign missions to another book. That said, comparisons can be made between the two areas, as suggested by the title of Antonello Ricci's essay "I suoni delle *Indias por acà*" ("The Sounds of the 'Indies over here'"), using an expression favoured by Jesuit evangelizers in Calabria during the period.

A mix of musicologists and Church and art historians from Italy, France, and Germany bring a breadth of insight that is a major strength of this book. The theme is music in its broadest sense as part of the mission, stressing its role in giving the Catholic faithful a voice. The editor Stefania Nanni points out in her introduction that, while the official post-Tridentine liturgy had no provision for a singing laity, this did not apply to processions and confraternity devotions where singing could be and was encouraged. She includes valuable information on the use of *laudi spirituali* and litanies by the Lazarists, founded by St. Vincent de Paul in the early seventeenth century. Daniele Zardin follows up with a useful survey of processions and confraternity devotions in Milan, while Paola Vismara extends our knowledge of music's use in catechizing by the *Dottrina Cristiana* in the same city; Bernard Dompnier does the same for France and Paologiovanni Maione surveys Neapolitan festal celebrations.

In a significant contribution, Bernadette Majorana examines the use of music in Jesuit missions within Italy. They believed that only shock-and-awe tactics would ensure a lasting conversion after they had departed, with one Jesuit even flagellating himself during processions. Music helped marshal people and prevented them from being distracted, but it also worked subliminally in helping absorb doctrines that might not have been understood intellectually. Music

also had a key role in the memorization of such basics as common prayers or lists of sins. Xavier Bisaro's essay explores the extensive use of small printed chant manuals by the laity during the ancien régime in France with the inescapable conclusion that the laity were joining in the liturgical singing of Latin chants.

Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists, is studied in two essays: one explores his compositions, including the ubiquitous Christmas carol *Tu scendi dalle stelle*, while the other examines the vocal delivery of sermons by his followers. Some essays stray beyond the book's brief: these include a study of Christmas art music in southwest France in the eighteenth century and a review of attempts to curtail musical excess in Roman churches. Three papers examine the use of music by the Oratorian Congregation, including the provision of contrafacta – the replacement of sacred texts – for secular madrigals; while useful, these studies largely recycle work available elsewhere. Art historian Stefania Macioce draws parallels between the actual use of music by groups such as the Oratorians and its metaphorical use, implied by the inclusion of angel musicians in the paintings of Caravaggio and his followers.

Three essays deal with New Spain, studying the use of music to catechize indigenous populations in Mexico, Peru, and Paraguay, while Johann Herczog provides an overview of Jesuit approaches throughout their missions, whether to Paraguay, Goa, or China. Questions of accommodation with local cultures loom large here, as they do in two essays on the important member of the Lazarist congregation, Teodorico Pedrini. A composer and music theorist, Pedrini used his expertise to gain influence at the Chinese imperial court before getting caught up in a controversy between Rome and the Jesuits over the latter's policy of mixing Confucian elements with traditional Christian rites.

Overall, this is a welcome compendium that helps correct a historical imbalance resulting from an over-concentration on art music for the elite. It gives a voice to those too often perceived to have been a silent majority.

Noel O'Regan
University of Edinburgh